

# 2016

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## DISTRICT 2 HUNTING PROSPECTS

Spokane, Lincoln, and Whitman counties

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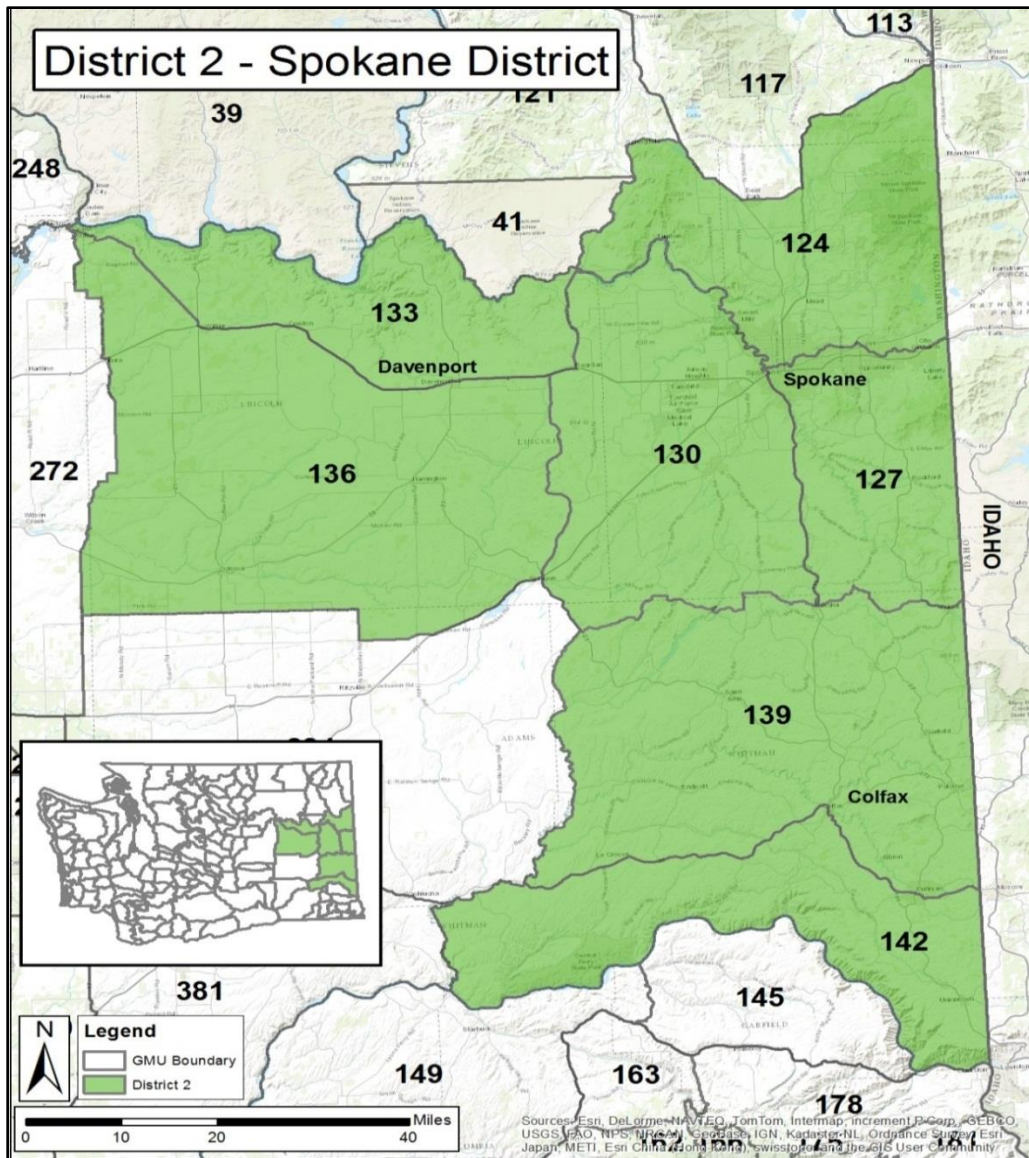
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## DISTRICT 2 GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) District 2 is located in eastern Washington, bordering Idaho, and covers Lincoln, Whitman, and Spokane counties. Game management units (GMUs) in District 2 include 124 (Mount Spokane), 127 (Mica Peak), 130 (Cheney), 133 (Roosevelt), 136 (Harrington), 139 (Steptoe), and 142 (Almota) (Figure 1). The majority of the district is in private ownership, so hunters are highly encouraged to secure access prior to the hunting season or applying for special permits.

The geography of District 2 includes the edge of the Rocky Mountain Range in the east, the Columbia Basin in the west, and the Channeled Scablands and Palouse in between. This diverse geography supports a wide range of habitats that include mixed coniferous forests dominated by Douglas fir, larch, dry Ponderosa pine, some aspen groves, scabland, sagebrush steppe, grasslands, and extensive agricultural lands. Topography varies from ~500 feet above sea level along the Snake River in the south to the 5883 foot Mount Spokane in the north. Dominant river drainages include the Spokane, Palouse, Columbia, & Snake rivers.

District 2 is best known for its deer hunting opportunities, including white-tailed deer in the Spokane and Palouse agricultural lands and mule deer in the Channeled Scablands and breaks of the Snake River. Quality hunting opportunities also exist for other game species, including pheasant and elk, if hunters have secured access to private lands. Moose and bighorn sheep hunters can enjoy quality hunts if they are selected for special permit hunts and if they have secured private land access prior to applying.



**Figure 1.** General location and game management units (GMUs) for WDFW District 2.

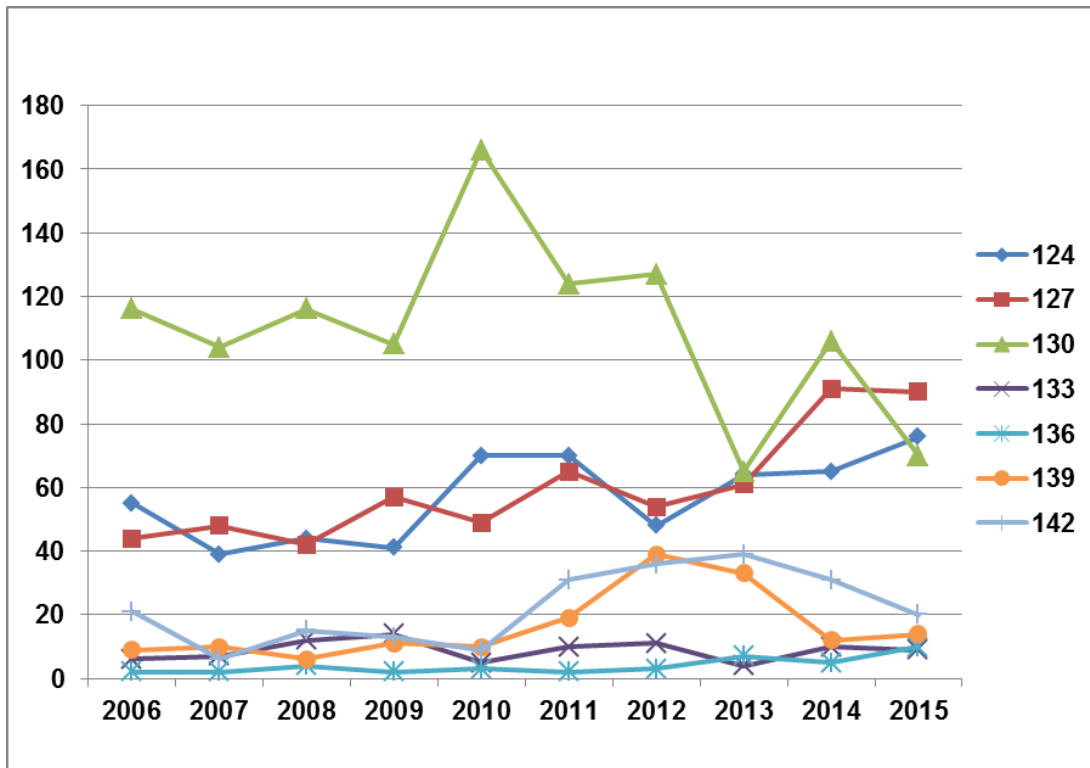


## ELK

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

The Spokane sub-herd of the Selkirk herd makes up the elk population in District 2. The Selkirk herd of Rocky Mountain elk originated in Pend Oreille County and has expanded its range over the last 40 years to this district. As elk habitat in District 2 continues to be lost to agricultural conversion and urban sprawl, our goal is to maintain the population at its current level (roughly 1000-1500 elk) to limit agricultural damage and conflict within urban areas. Consequently, an “any elk” harvest is offered for the general season in all GMUs. The majority of the land in the district is in private ownership, so managing this population requires landowner tolerance and cooperation.

WDFW does not currently make formal population size estimates to monitor elk in most of District 2. Rather, opportunistic surveys, harvest data (Figures 2-5), sightings, and damage complaints are generally used to indicate population trends. The exception is GMU 130 (Cheney), where the majority of the district’s elk harvest (25-50%) typically occurs. The Cheney Unit includes Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, which has been regularly surveyed for herd composition for the last 12 years. WDFW’s herd composition objective is to maintain a ratio of 15 to 35 bulls per 100 cows pre-hunt and/or 12 to 20 bulls per 100 cows post-hunt. The 2015 pre-hunt aerial survey in GMU 130 found the bull:cow ratio to be within this management objective. Based on the survey, 2015 calf production was somewhat higher than the past two years, with a calf:cow ratio of 58:100. Combined data sources for District 2 over the last ten years indicate a stable to slightly increasing population. For more detail on the status of elk in Washington, see WDFW’s most recent [Game Status and Trend Report](#). Also newly available is a general how-to guide for elk hunting entitled, “The Basics of Elk Hunting in Washington.” You can find this document on the [WDFW website](#).



**Figure 2.** Elk general season total harvest in District 2 by GMU for all weapon types combined.

## WHICH GMU SHOULD ELK HUNTERS HUNT?

For archery hunters, GMUs 124 & 127 provide the best terrain, whereas the terrain in GMUs 136-142 is better suited for muzzleloader and modern firearm. The highest proportion of the elk harvest consistently occurs in GMUs 124, 127, and 130 (Figure 2). General hunt participants who gain access to private lands in GMU 130 have typically had the highest success (Figure 4), probably benefitting from animals moving on and off Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge during the season. With one third of the elk hunters in District 2, GMU 124 (Mount Spokane) sustains the greatest hunting pressure. As a result, overall hunter success is lower there, although the unit typically does produce one of the highest numbers of mature bulls (6+ points) in the harvest (Figure 3). Private timber companies, especially Inland Empire Paper, offer public access in this unit with a paid permit. See Inland Empire Paper Company - [Recreational Use](#) for their rules and regulations. Hunters should be aware that motorized access may be limited or closed completely on Inland Empire Paper (IEP) and other timber company lands due to road conditions or fire danger. Hunters are advised to check closures and restrictions before setting out. IEP [access updates](#) can be found online.

Elk in District 2 appear to be expanding into new areas, and harvest in GMUs 139 (Steptoe) and 142 (Almota) has increased over the last 5 years. Some of these appear to be elk that move back and forth between Idaho and Washington, so timing and access to private lands will be the key to successful elk hunting in these GMUs. Complaints of agricultural damage have been on the rise, especially in areas where crops have been recently converted to legumes. These scattered groups of 20-100 elk have been reported causing damage in areas including Fairfield south to Tekoa in GMU 127, the area from Dusty east to Palouse, south to Uniontown, and along the Snake River breaks in GMUs 139 and 142, and from the Lincoln/Spokane County border near Tyler north to Long Lake in GMU 130.

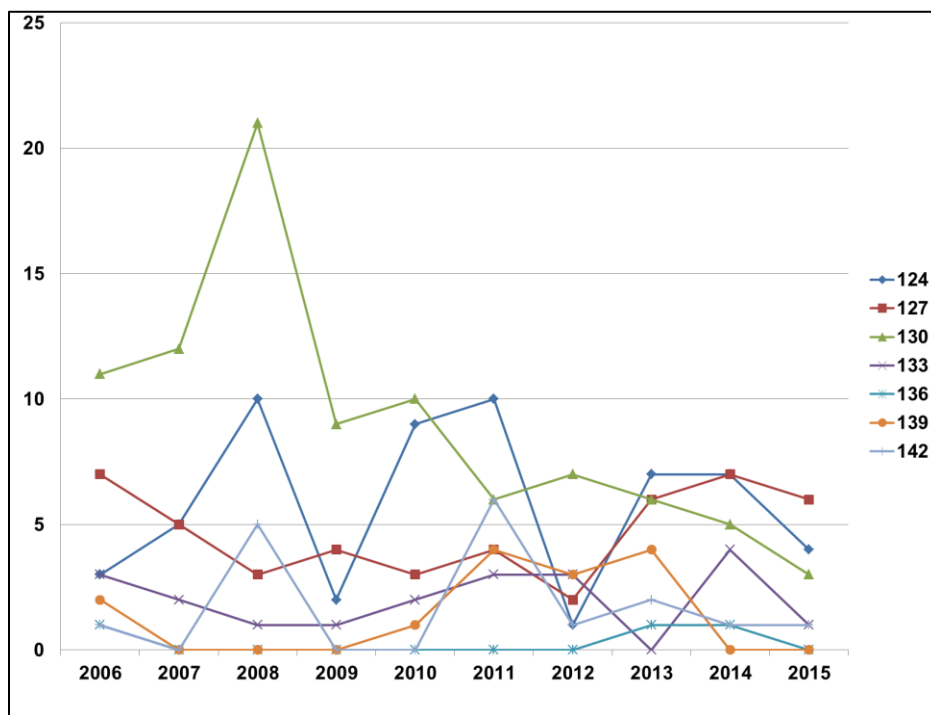
For more detailed harvest information, visit:

District 2 - 2015 Game Harvest Statistics:

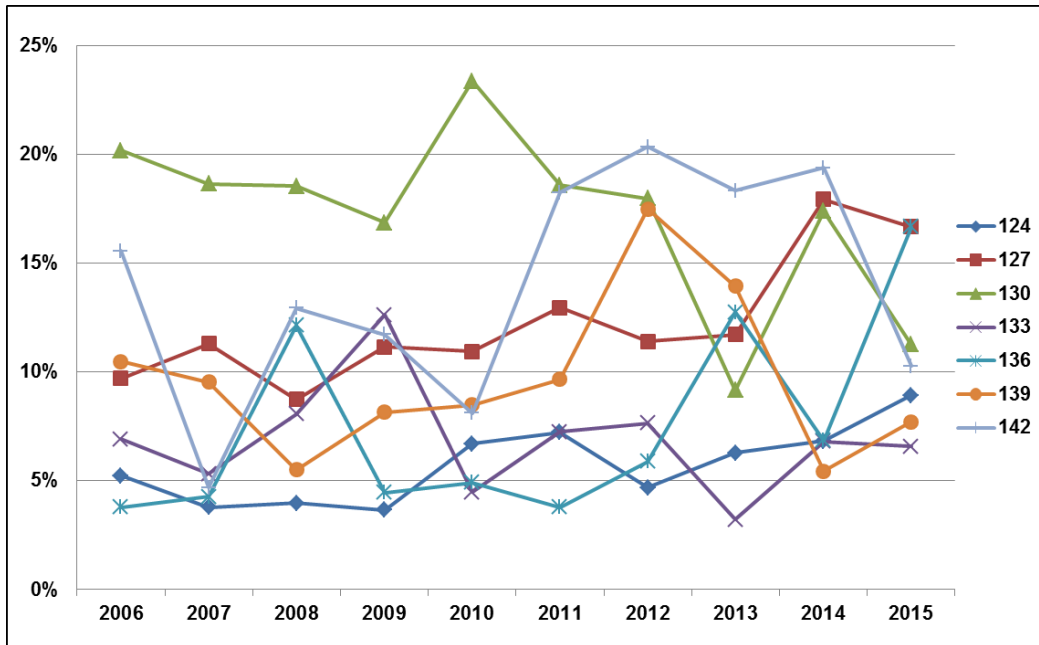
Elk Harvest: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2015/reports/elk\\_gmu.php?District=2](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2015/reports/elk_gmu.php?District=2)

Elk Special Permits Harvest:

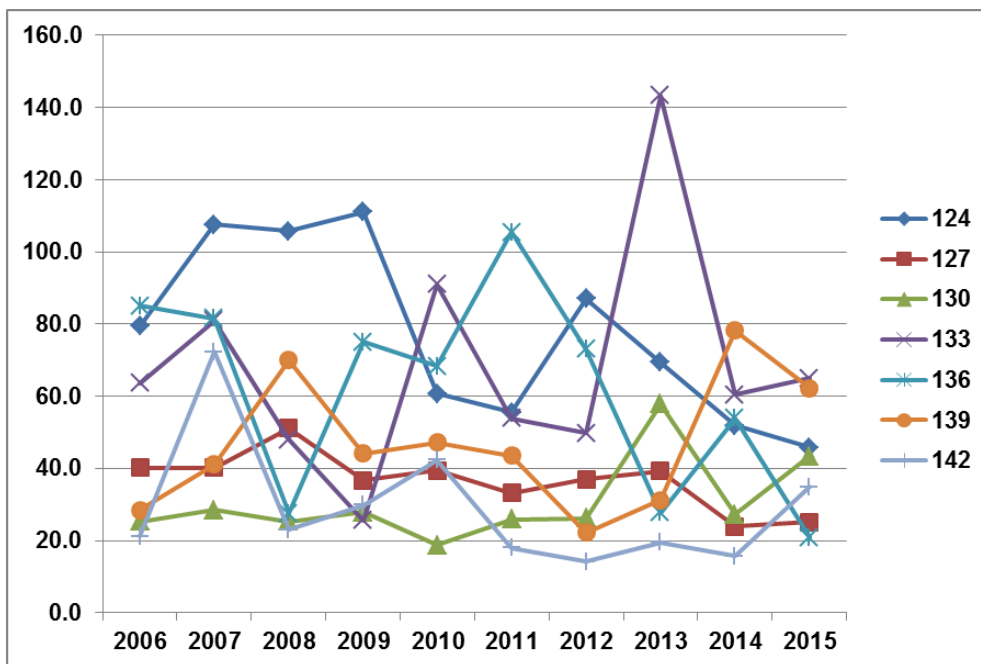
[http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2015/reports/elk\\_permits\\_gmu.php?District=2](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2015/reports/elk_permits_gmu.php?District=2)



**Figure 3.** Number of mature bulls (6+ points) harvested by GMU in District 2.



**Figure 4.** Elk general season hunter success in District 2 by GMU for all weapon types combined.



**Figure 5.** Elk general season hunter effort (days/kill) in District 2 by GMU for all weapon types combined.



## **ELK AREAS**

Elk Area 1015 is located within Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. Turnbull special permit hunts were created in 2010 to address damage to aspen stands and address complaints from landowners in the area. These are walk-in only hunts, except for Disabled Hunt permit holders. Since inception, one bull permit (any weapon type) and 62 antlerless permits, including each weapon type, Youth, Master Hunter, and Hunters with Disabilities, have been offered. Turnbull hunters averaged 32% success for antlerless hunts in 2015, 18% lower than the previous 5-year average of 45%. This is primarily driven by low success during the archery hunt (8% success on average). The bull permit was successful the first four years of the hunt, but not for the last two. For more information about Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, visit [Turnbull - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#).

To address winter property damage in the area, there are also several late season raffle permits and WDFW special permits offered on Columbia Plateau Wildlife Management Association (CPWMA) properties in areas around Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. See the Private Lands Program section for more information on acreage enrolled and the [CPWMA](#) website for details on hunt management.

## **NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES**

Across all GMUs, elk hunter success has averaged 10% over the last 10 years, and hunter effort (days/kill) has averaged 50 days/kill. These numbers vary widely by GMU (Figures 4-5), as hunter success depends heavily on the work the hunter is willing to put in to obtain access to private property. There are over 50 landowners enrolled in WDFW's private land hunting access program. The majority of these are built around upland game and deer hunting. However, some support elk hunting as well, so opportunities exist for elk hunters who do their research. For locations of these properties, visit the [GoHunt](#) website.

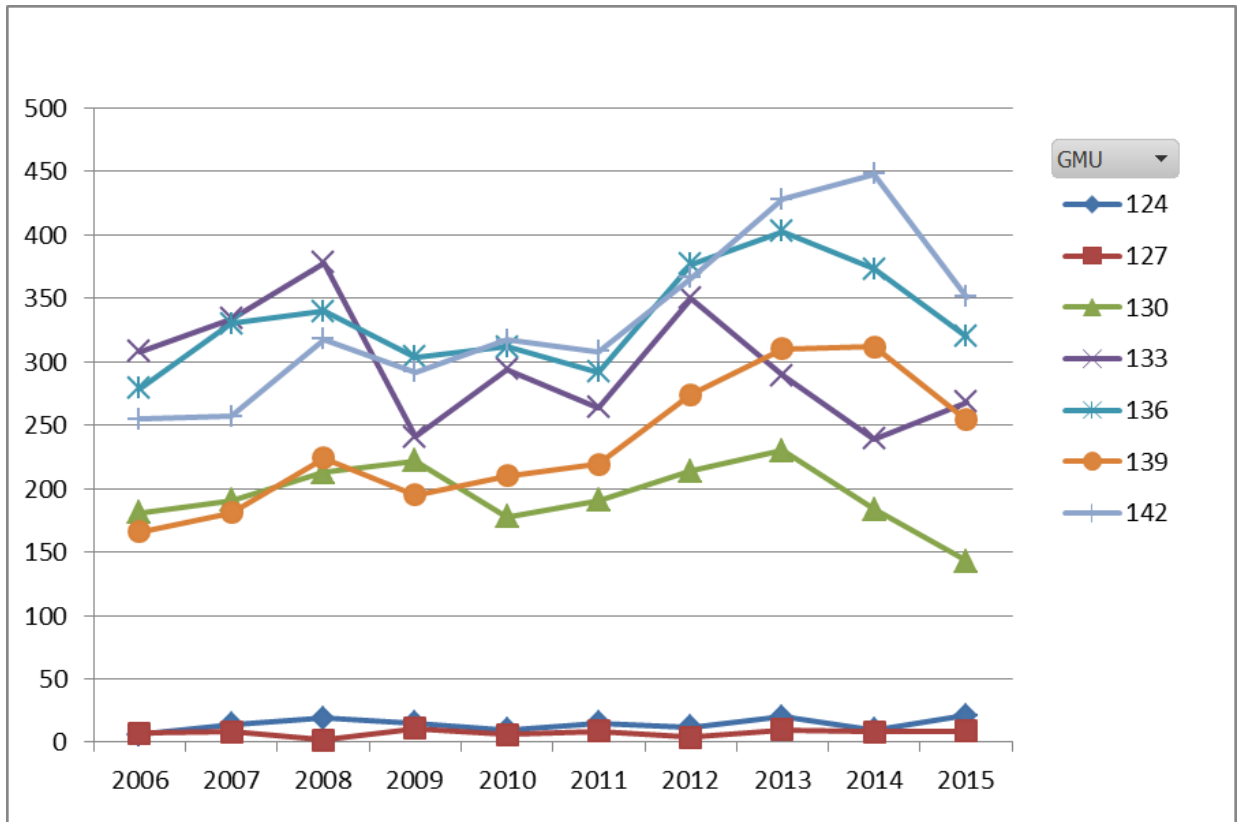
## DEER

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

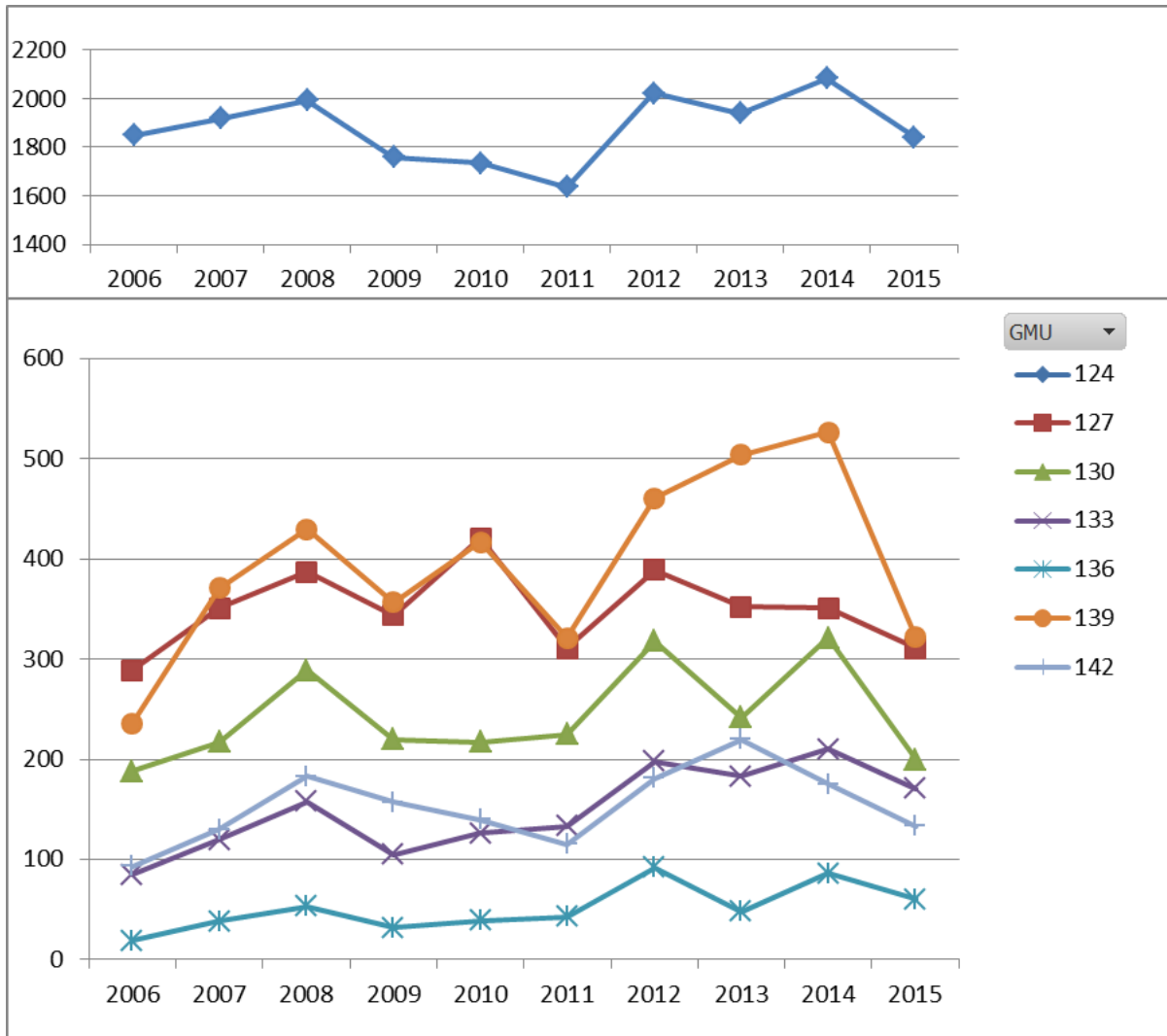
District 2 has both white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). White-tailed deer are found predominantly in the north and east portions of the district, in the forest/agricultural interface and along riparian corridors. Mule deer are predominantly found in the west and south of the district, in the shrub steppe, scablands, and farm lands.

Deer population levels are closely tied to droughts, severe winters, and land use practices. The primary management objective for white-tailed and mule deer in District 2 is to keep the herds stable to slightly increasing and within landowner tolerance. Given the majority of the land in the district is in private ownership, managing this population without landowner cooperation is impossible. Additional management objectives include maintaining herds at 15-19 bucks to 100 does in the postseason population.

Currently, WDFW does not use formal estimates or indices of population size to manage white-tailed deer populations in District 2. Instead, trends in harvest (Figures 6 & 7), hunter success (Figure 8), days per kill (Figure 9), and pre-season sex and age ratios (Figure 10), are used to estimate populations. WDFW recognizes the limitations of using this data to monitor trends in population size and we are currently evaluating new approaches to monitoring white-tailed deer populations. The harvest statistics above are also used for managing mule deer, however congregations of mule deer on wintering grounds allows for viable post-season aerial surveys to estimate populations periodically. Flights are flown every 3-5 years in conjunction with Districts 4 & 5. Recent flights estimate the mule deer herds in the Washtucna and Odessa areas to be around 13,000 and 11,000 respectively. For more details on the results from these flights, please see the Columbia Basin Mule Deer Management Zone section of the 2016 Game Status and Trend Report.

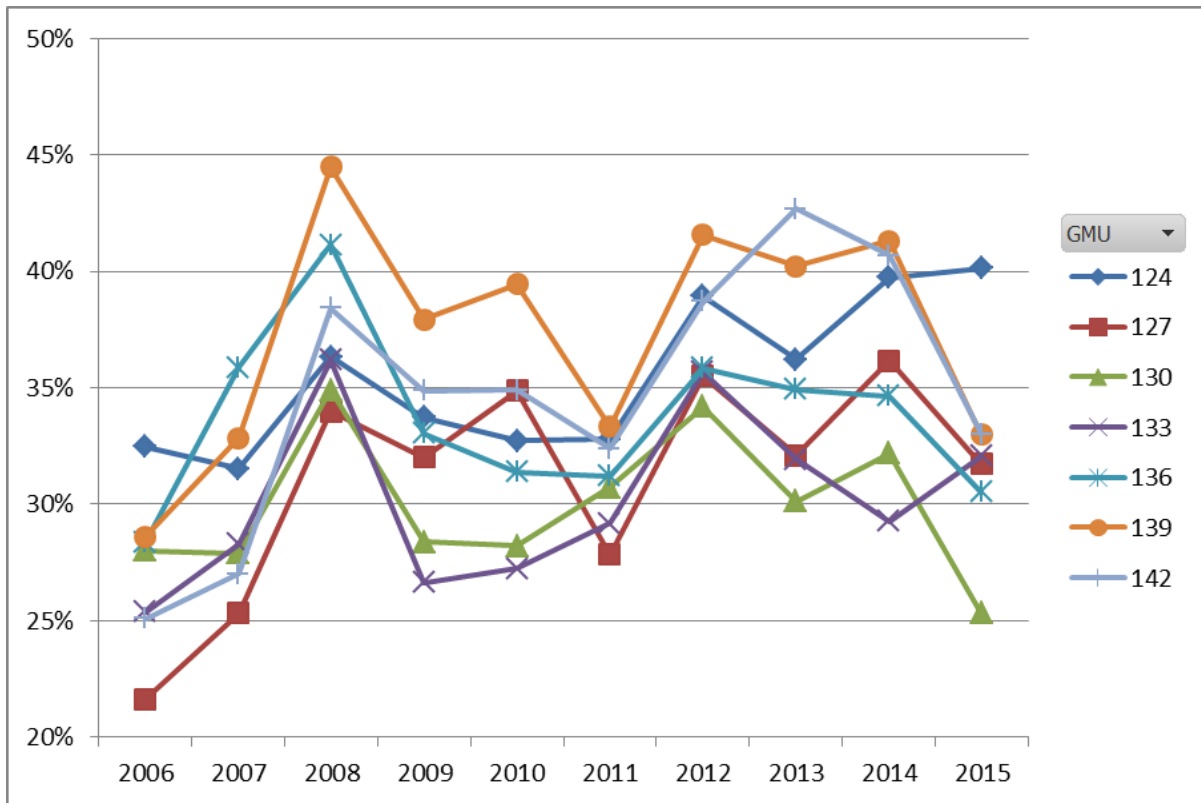


**Figure 6.** Mule deer general season buck harvest in District 2 by GMU for all weapon types combined.



**Figure 7.** White-tailed deer general season buck harvest in District 2 by GMU for all weapon types combined.

The harvest of mule deer bucks has remained relatively stable in the district over the past 10 years (Figure 6), with some declines seen in 2015 likely associated with lower recruitment in 2014 due to drought (Figure 10). White-tailed harvest appears stable overall in the district, though all GMUs saw a decline in harvest in 2015, likely due to an outbreak of blue tongue virus (Figure 7).

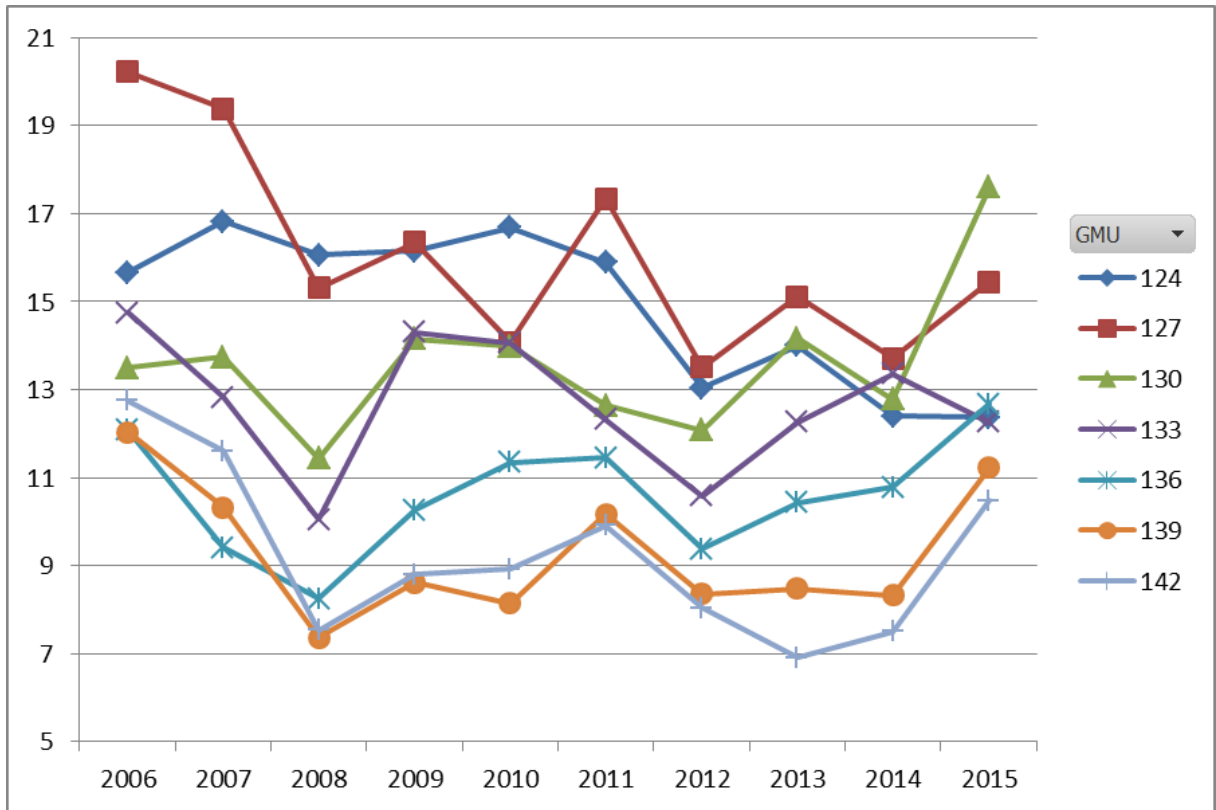


**Figure 8.** Deer general season hunter success in District 2 by GMU for all weapon types combined.

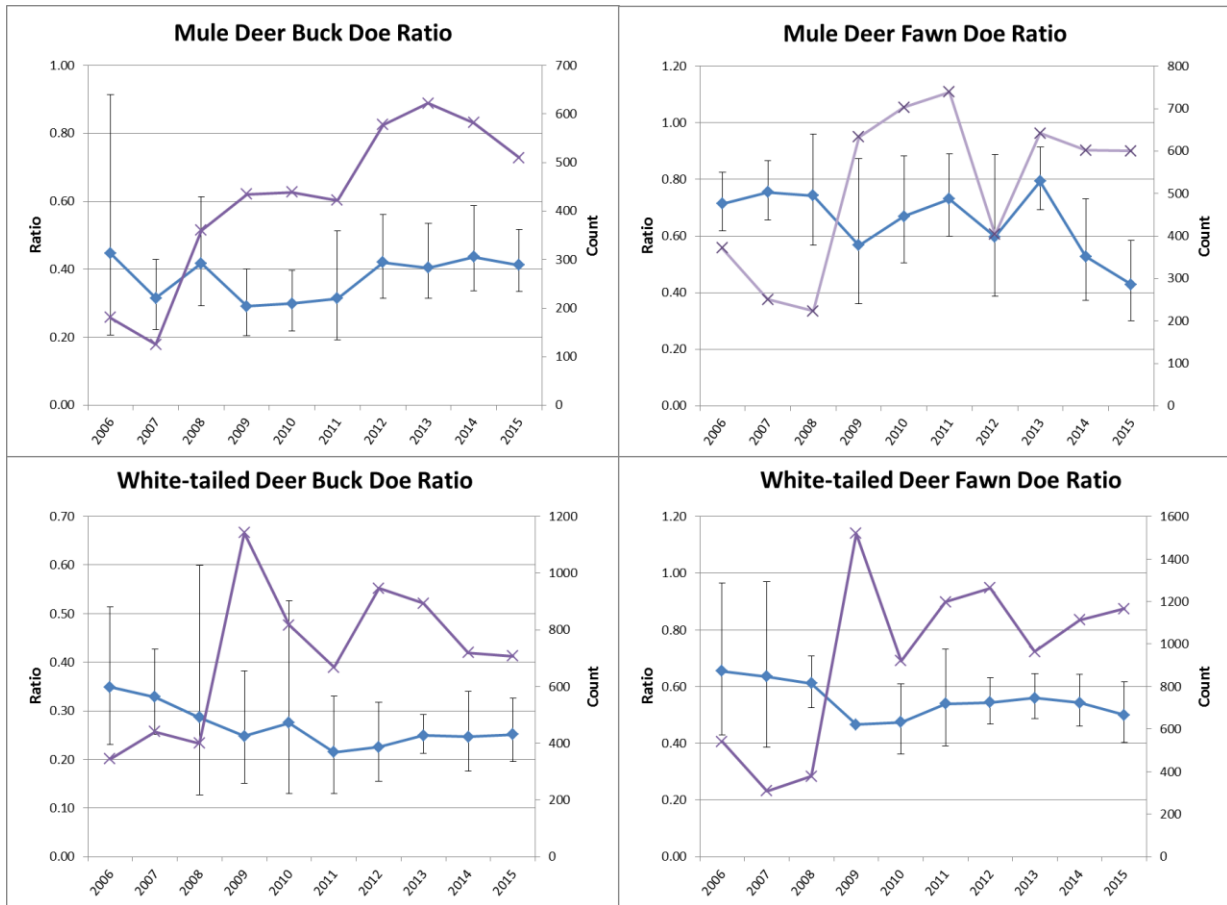
Similar to harvest, hunter success declined in 2015 in most GMUs, but remains in line with the 10-year average of 33% (Figure 8). Hunter effort (days/kill) increased in 2015 from 11 days/kill on average in 2014 to 13 days in 2015, but remains in line with the 10-year average of 12 days/kill (Figure 9). Pre-season fawn to 100 doe ratios for mule and white-tailed deer have been relatively stable over the past 10 years (Figure 10).

However, mule deer fawn to doe ratios have been lower the past two years, likely associated with dry conditions reducing available forage. Pre-season buck to 100 doe ratios for mule and white-tailed deer have been relatively stable over the past 10 years, averaging 38 mule and 27 white-tailed bucks per 100 does (Figure 10).





**Figure 9.** Deer general season days/kill in District 2 by GMU for all weapon types combined.



**Figure 10.** District 2 pre-season buck to doe (August) and fawn to doe (September) ratios (blue lines with 90% CI) and total count (purple lines) by species.

Overall harvest data and pre-season ratios taken together indicate white-tailed and mule deer populations are stable to slightly increasing in District 2, but are susceptible to short term declines due to stochastic events (drought, disease, etc.). Damage complaints associated with these herds are a perennial issue, indicative of the need to account for social carrying capacity when considering management. For more information related to the status of deer in Washington, hunters should read through the most recent version of the [Game Status and Trend Report](#), which is available for download on the WDFW website.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2016 SEASON

White-tailed and mule deer hunting opportunities in District 2 vary from marginal to excellent, depending on the GMU and if private land access has been secured. The best opportunities to harvest a mule deer in District 2 occur in GMUs 136, 139, & 142 on private property (Figure 6). The best opportunities to harvest a white-tailed deer in District 2 occur in GMUs 124, 127, 130, & 139 on private property (Figure 7). For

archery hunters, GMUs 124 & 127 provide the best terrain, whereas the terrain in GMUs 136-142 is better suited for muzzleloader and modern firearm.

Low mule deer fawn production in 2014 & 2015 (Figure 10) will likely combine to produce poor recruitment and slightly lower populations in 2016. However, the mild 2015/16 winter and the wet summer should help survival and recruitment this coming year. The outbreak of blue tongue last year was widespread, but the intensity was patchy, so white-tailed deer populations will be lower overall and significantly lower in some local areas. With average white-tailed deer fawn production in 2015 (Figure 10), as well as a mild winter, white-tailed herds should experience good recruitment and will hopefully be working their way back to pre-outbreak levels in a year or two.

There is a three-antler-point minimum regulation in GMUs 127-142 for white-tailed deer, and the late white-tailed deer season in GMUs 127-142 is by permit only (Palouse) as of 2006. Hunter success is, on average, higher for Palouse (47%), with 5+ point bucks making up, on average, a greater percentage of the kill (38%) when compared to the general season 2001 to 2006 average of 24% and the 27% averaged since 2006. There are currently 750 permits offered for the Palouse hunt.

Mule and white-tailed deer populations overlap in District 2, so make sure to identify the species before harvesting an animal, since regulations can differ between species within a GMU. The bulk of District 2 is private land, and buck hunters will have to put in the time to get access. Doe hunters should have an easier time given the agricultural nature of this district. We have enrolled many new cooperators in our hunter access program in southeast Washington. See the Private Lands Program section below and note that the locations are mapped on the [GoHunt website](#).

For more 2015 harvest information from District 2 visit:

- Deer General Harvest:

- [http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2015/reports/deer\\_gmu.php?District=2](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2015/reports/deer_gmu.php?District=2)

- Deer Special Permits Harvest:

- [http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2015/reports/deer\\_permits\\_gmu.php?District=2](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2015/reports/deer_permits_gmu.php?District=2)

## **DEER AREAS**

There are suburban/rural areas in District 2 where deer congregate and have the potential to cause landscape/property and agricultural damage. To help address this issue, extended general season opportunities have been created for youth, senior, & disabled hunters to harvest antlerless deer that occur in these areas. Additionally, 975 second tags, half of the district's second tag (doe only) opportunities, are focused in these areas. The remaining 975 second tags are primarily offered in the rural GMUs (133-142) to help

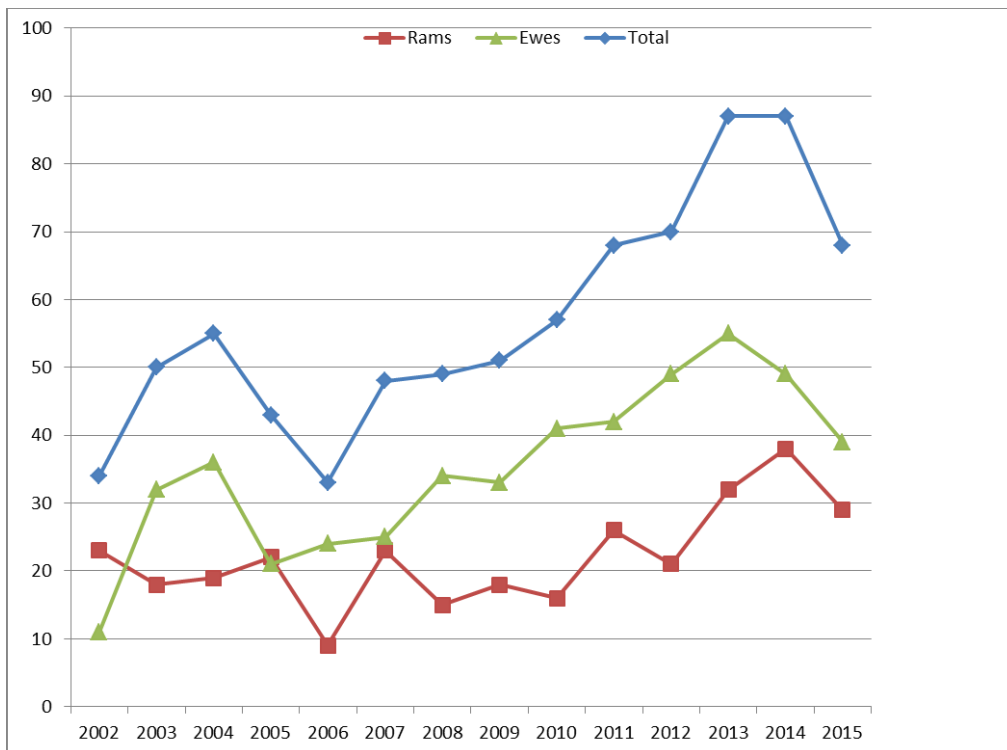
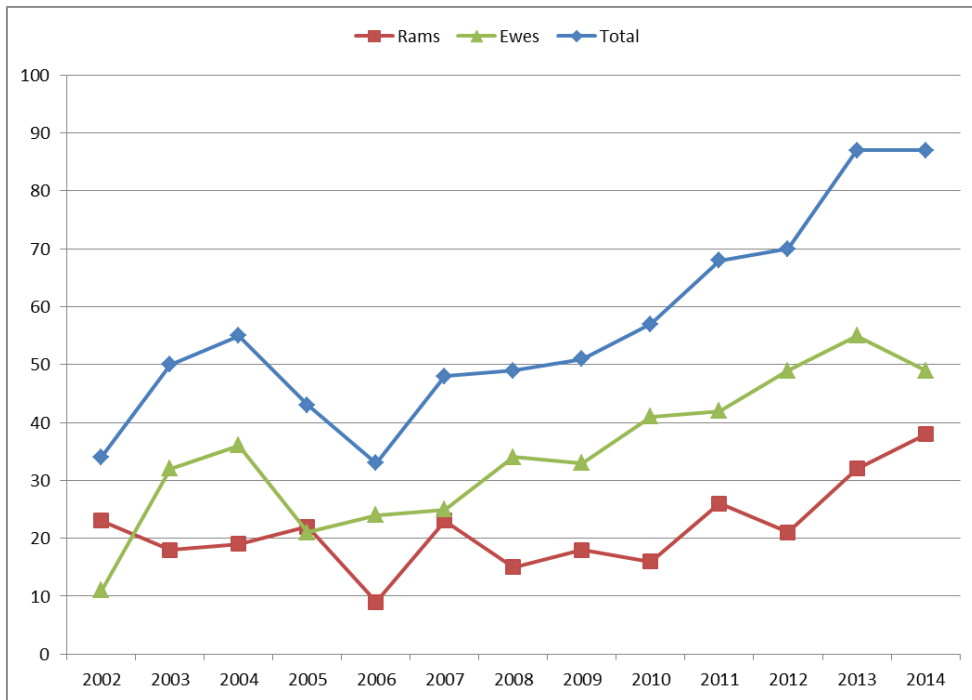
address agricultural damage. WDFW deer area locations and boundaries are mapped on the GoHunt website. As noted above, these second tags are focused on private lands dealing with damage and hunters are highly encouraged to secure permission prior to applying for these special permits.

## BIGHORN SHEEP

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

District 2 is home to one herd of California bighorn sheep, found in GMU 133 north of Highway 2 in Lincoln County (visit GoHunt for a map). These sheep can most often be seen in the cliffs above the town of Lincoln, as well as in town, and in the cliffs around Whitestone Rock approximately seven miles downstream from Lincoln. Sheep are also observed frequently in the cliffs above Sterling Valley (the area between Lincoln and Whitestone) and in surrounding agricultural fields, where they have been reported causing crop damage.

WDFW has conducted regular aerial surveys to assess the status of the Lincoln Cliffs herd since 2002. Minimum population size is estimated by the count of rams and ewes observed during these flights (Figure 10). After several years of increase, the population is showing signs of leveling off, and has likely reached the largest feasible herd size here due to social tolerance and available habitat quantity and quality. For more details on the history of the Lincoln Cliffs herd and the status of bighorn sheep in Washington, see WDFW's 2015 Game Status and Trend Report.



**Figure 10.** Lincoln Cliffs minimum population estimate by sex for 2002-2015. Estimated as the maximum count from helicopter surveys conducted each year.



## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2016 SEASON

Bighorn sheep hunting in Washington requires a special permit. One ram permit for the Lincoln Cliffs herd was offered each year from 1997–2013. In 2014 and 2015 this was increased to two ram permits, and two will be issued again for the 2016 season. The average number of applicants for this hunt over the last five years is 1,724 and harvest success has remained at 100%. The area is almost entirely private property and permittees will need to obtain permission to access these properties for their hunt.

## MOOSE

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Moose in northeast Washington are Shiras moose (*Alces alces shirasi*). Moose were not believed to be common or widely distributed in the Rocky Mountain states in the 1800s, and it was not until 1908, when explorer George Shiras III found a fairly large population in Yellowstone National Park, that this mountain race was described. Shiras moose were only rarely noted in Washington until the late 1950s when distribution began to expand into eastern Pend Oreille County. Moose have dramatically increased in numbers and distribution in the last couple of decades and are now relatively common throughout northeast Washington.

Statewide moose management goals are to: 1) Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage moose and their habitats to ensure healthy productive populations; 2) Manage for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes; and 3) Manage statewide moose populations for a sustained yield. The proximity of an expanding moose population near the Spokane metropolitan area adds the challenge of balancing population objectives with human safety and the community's tolerance of moose.

Currently, WDFW uses harvest metrics to monitor and manage moose populations in District 2. From 2002 to 2012, annual winter aerial surveys were flown by district biologists covering a sub-sample of each hunt unit in District 2. General trends in observed moose during aerial survey flights indicate a stable to growing population in each area. However, there was large variability in the observed count between years and the methodology was not successful in producing reliable population estimates. In 2013, WDFW began work on developing a new survey methodology that would produce reliable population estimates over the entire northeast (GMUS 101-130), but result in lower coverage of individual units. The winter of 2013 allowed for a pilot year, no flights were conducted in 2014 due to lack of snow, and limited flights were flown in 2015 due to poor weather conditions and limited snow cover.

Harvest management emphasizes quality hunting opportunities through a limited entry permit process. A total of 67 permits are offered in District 2 in a variety of categories (Table 1). Prior to 2012, District 2 had two moose hunt units (MHU), Mount Spokane (GMU 124 east of 395) and Hangman (GMUS 127 & 130). In 2012, the Mount Spokane MHU was split into Mount Spokane North and Mount Spokane South (maps found [here](#)) to help distribute hunters more evenly across the area and increase hunter opportunity. In 2015, the Hangman MHU was split into the Mica Peak (GMU 127) and Cheney (GMU 130) MHUs for antlerless hunts only due to the vast majority of hunters only hunting in Mica Peak and increasing complaints of moose in Cheney. Additionally in 2015, the Spokane West Moose MHU was split off of the Huckleberry MHU to distribute hunters and increase opportunity.

**Table 1.** Permits offered in District 2 by moose hunt unit for 2016.

Moose Unit	Any Moose	Antlerless Only		
	General	General	Disabled	Youth
Mount Spokane North	8	7	1	8
Mount Spokane South	8	8	0	8
Spokane West	1	2	0	0
Hangman	7	0	0	0
Mica Peak	0	7	0	0
Cheney	0	2	0	0

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2016 SEASON

Hunters should take note that moose are by nature a solitary animal and are scattered over very wide areas as individuals or in small groups. While they can be found at any elevation, they are most likely found between 3,000 to 5,000 feet. In the fall they are looking for deciduous browse, primarily willow brush, serviceberry, ceonothus, and other shrubs in clear-cuts or burns 7-15 years old. Moose seek out the cooler, moist drainage basins and slopes. North slopes or east flowing drainage basins are generally preferred. Moose are still in the rut in early October and some hunters have been effective with calls. By November, snow is common and locating moose tracks and seeing these dark animals with a snow background is much easier. However, by mid to late November, there is usually enough snow that motor vehicle access can be limited. Experience shows that moose seek out snow rather than avoid it in late fall and early winter. In years without much snow, they are found right around the top of the mountains. In years with a lot of snow, they move down to the foothill band around the mountains. Moose habitat in the district is largely located on private timber company lands, but smaller private ownerships can also harbor good moose concentrations. Permit holders should exercise caution and know where they and the targeted moose are at all times given the percentage

of private land ownership, proximity to Idaho, and non-hunting lands (state & county parks, national wildlife refuge) within the moose hunting units.

See below for specific harvest metrics for each MHU and checkout the [Moose Hunting in Eastern Washington](#) document online for more details about access and moose distribution in individual MHUs.

### **Mount Spokane North Moose Hunt Unit**

Success rate for the Any Moose hunt in this unit was 100% in 2015 and has averaged 97% since its creation in 2012. Hunters have on average spent five days per kill, but spent seven days per kill in 2015. The average spread of bulls harvested is 35 inches, with the largest bull harvested measuring 45 inches. Success rates for all Antlerless Only hunts combined in this unit was 67% in 2015 and have averaged 90% since creation in 2012. Hunters have on average spent five days per kill, but spent eight days per kill in 2015. Overall, the moose population in this unit appears stable, but decreasing success rates and increasing effort is a concern and will be closely monitored. Some of the decline in success last year may have been due to the prolonged drought and timberland access closures due to fire risk.

### **Mount Spokane South Moose Hunt Unit**

Success rate for the Any Moose hunt in this unit was 100% in 2015 and has averaged 96% since its creation in 2012. Hunters have on average spent five days per kill, but spent seven days per kill in 2015. The average spread of bulls harvested is 35 inches, with the largest bull harvested measuring 46 inches. Success rates for all Antlerless Only hunts combined in this unit was 75% in 2015 and have average 88% since creation in 2012. Hunters have on average spent four days per kill, but spent seven days per kill in 2015. Overall, the moose population in this unit appears stable, but decreasing success rates and increasing effort is a concern and will be closely monitored. Some of the decline in success last year may have been due to the prolonged drought and timberland access closures due to fire risk.

### **Spokane West Moose Hunt Unit**

This MHU was split off from the Huckleberry MHU in 2015, so there is no historic data to compare. There was only one Any Moose permit offered and the permittee successfully harvested a 32 inch bull in one day of hunting. There were two Antlerless permits offered, and both hunters were successful, with one spending three days and the other one day hunting. The low number of days per kill and the 36 moose seen by the permittees indicate a good population of moose in this unit.

### **Hangman Moose Hunt Unit**

Success rate for the Any Moose hunt in this unit was 86% (6/7 permittees) in 2015, which is similar to the 5-year average of 91%, but low when compared to the 100% success rate seen from 2001-2010 (first 10 years of this hunt). Hunters spent 11 days per kill on average in 2015, more than double the previous 5-year average of five days per kill. The average spread of bulls harvested in the previous 10 years is 36 inches, with the largest bull ever harvested measuring 52 inches. Average spread of the bulls harvested in 2015 was 38 inches and ranged from 30-48 inches. Overall, the moose population in this unit appears to be declining in areas open to general hunting access (e.g., DNR and Inland Empire Paper Company), but increasing in areas closed to hunting or where access is limited. Hunters are strongly encouraged to secure private land access for this hunt.

### **Mica Peak Moose Hunt Unit**

There are no Any Moose permits specific to just this unit (Hangman MHU incorporates both Mica Peak and Cheney MHUs). The following Antlerless harvest statistics include the Hangman Unit data because the vast majority of permittees prior to 2015 harvested their animals in Mica Peak. The success rate for Antlerless Only hunts was 43% in 2015, down significantly from the previous 5-year average of 81%. Hunters have on average spent four days per kill, but spent 14 days per kill in 2015. Overall, the moose population in this unit appears to be declining in areas open to general hunting access (e.g., DNR and Inland Empire Paper Company), but increasing in areas closed to hunting or where access is limited. Hunters are encouraged to secure private land access for this hunt if they want to increase their odds of success.

### **Cheney Moose Hunt Unit**

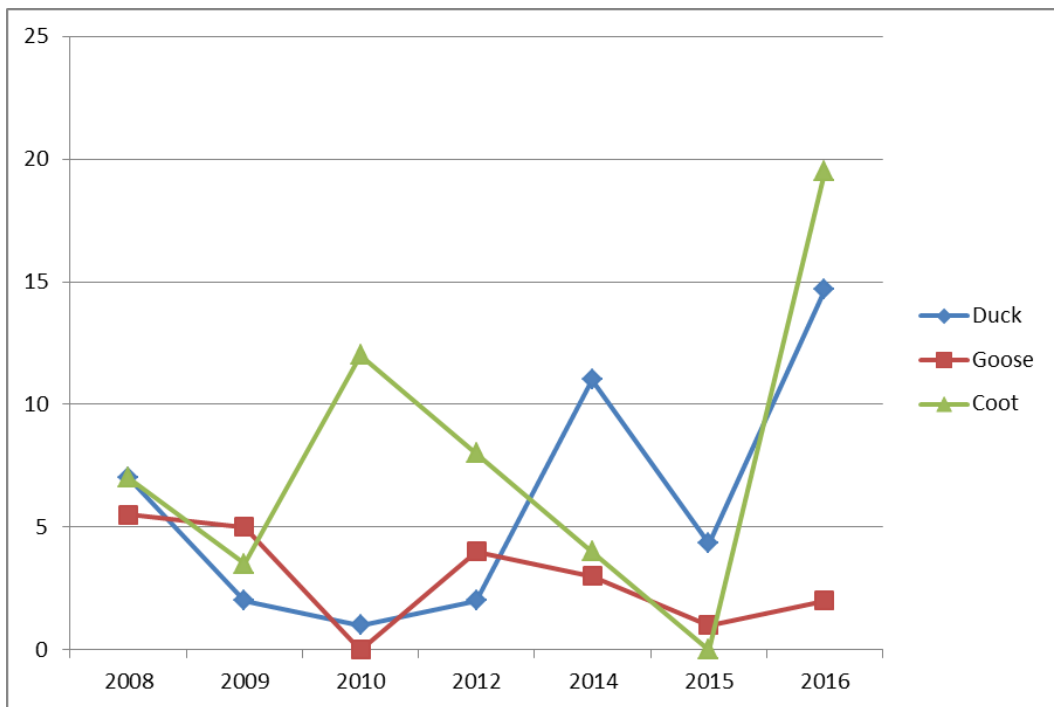
This MHU was split off from the Hangman MHU in 2015 because essentially no permittees hunted it and there were an increasing number of complaints regarding moose in suburban/rural areas. However, this unit is almost entirely private land, the larger blocks of public land are NOT open to hunting, and the moose are dispersed and highly mobile. Only one of the two Antlerless Only permittees reported for this hunt in 2015. The permittee was successful after 15 days of hunting. Though we were not able to contact the other permittee to confirm, we believe the hunt was unsuccessful based on conversations with the permittee prior to the close of the season. Hunters are STRONGLY encouraged to secure private land access for this hunt prior to applying for the permit.

District 2 also has a Master Hunter Only Coordinated Damage Hunt. WDFW Enforcement coordinates this hunt and we currently offer 10 permits. However, the opportunity to hunt under this permit depends on problem moose occurring in a safe area to harvest. This hunt was first offered in 2009, and over the seven years of this hunt's

existence there have been only eight moose harvested. If you are successfully drawn for this hunt, DO NOT purchase the license and tag until you have been contacted by WDFW Enforcement.

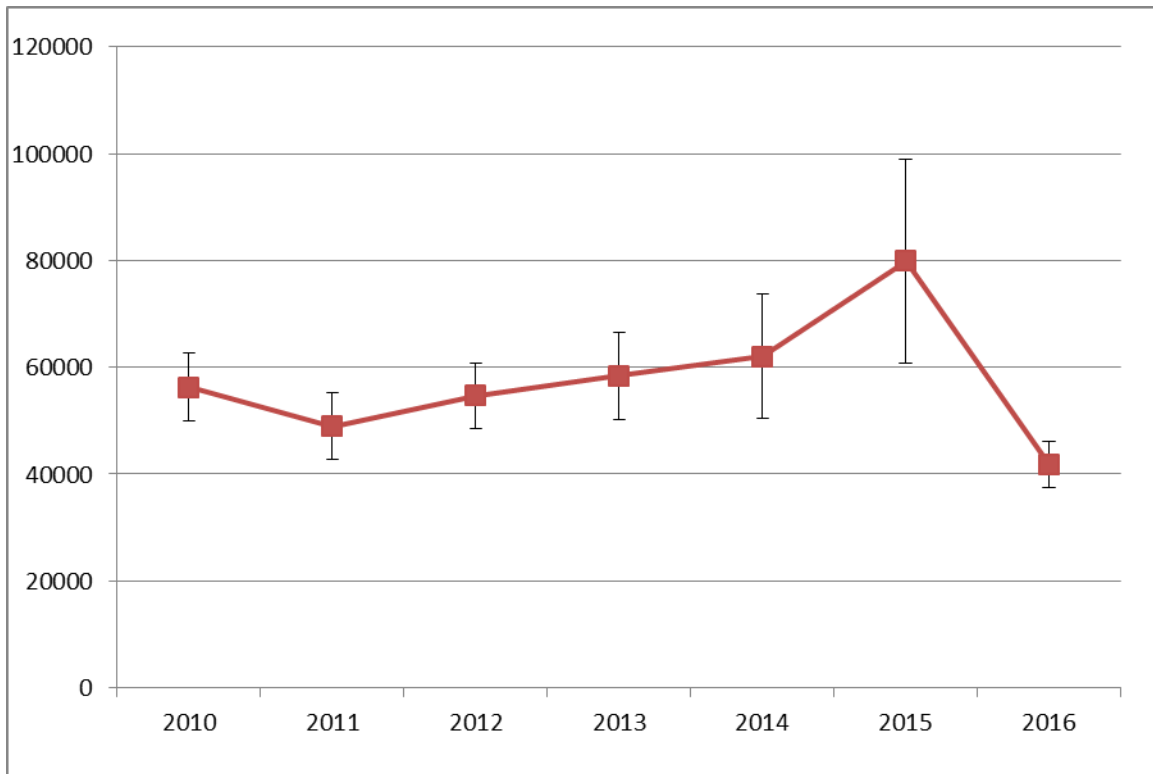
## WATERFOWL

At the statewide level, District 2 is not known for its duck hunting and is not a large duck production area due to the ephemeral nature of the waterbodies in the Channeled Scablands. Local surveys indicate brood production is up this year, with more duck and coot broods seen than in the last eight years (Figure 12). The most common breeding duck species in the area are mallard, gadwall, and redhead. Other common waterfowl species in District 2 include coots, ruddy duck, and all three teal species. Based on breeding population surveys (BPOP), duck numbers overall appear to be increasing in the Potholes region of eastern Washington, though they were down this year (Figure 13). Given the limited number of local nesting ducks, the waterfowl hunting opportunity in this district is dependent upon the number of migrants coming from Canada and Alaska, the amount of summer and fall precipitation, and how long waterbodies remain ice-free. Hunters should focus their efforts on larger perennial waterbodies unless fall rains are significant when shallow, flooded agricultural fields become duck and geese hot spots. For more information on waterfowl hunting and waterfowl hunting areas in Region 1, see the [WDFW website](#).



**Figure 12.** Average number of broods observed per route for District 2 brood production ground surveys.



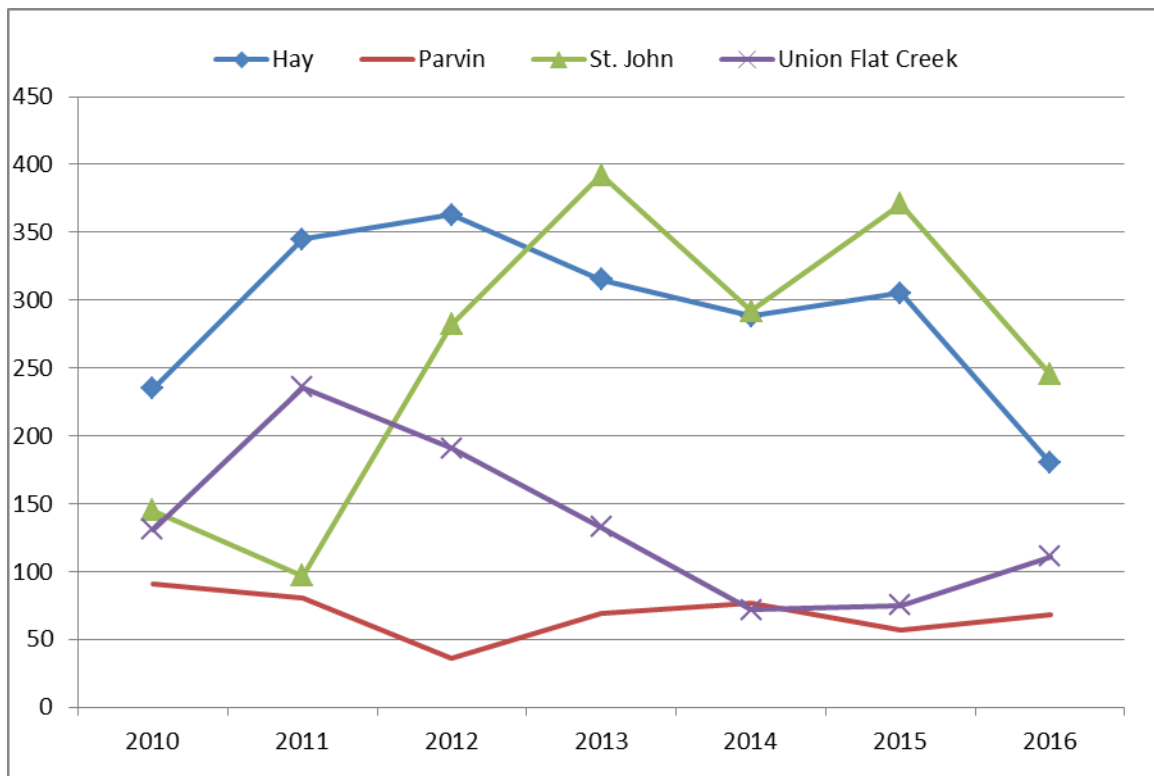


**Figure 13.** Total duck estimates from breeding population surveys for the Potholes region of eastern Washington.

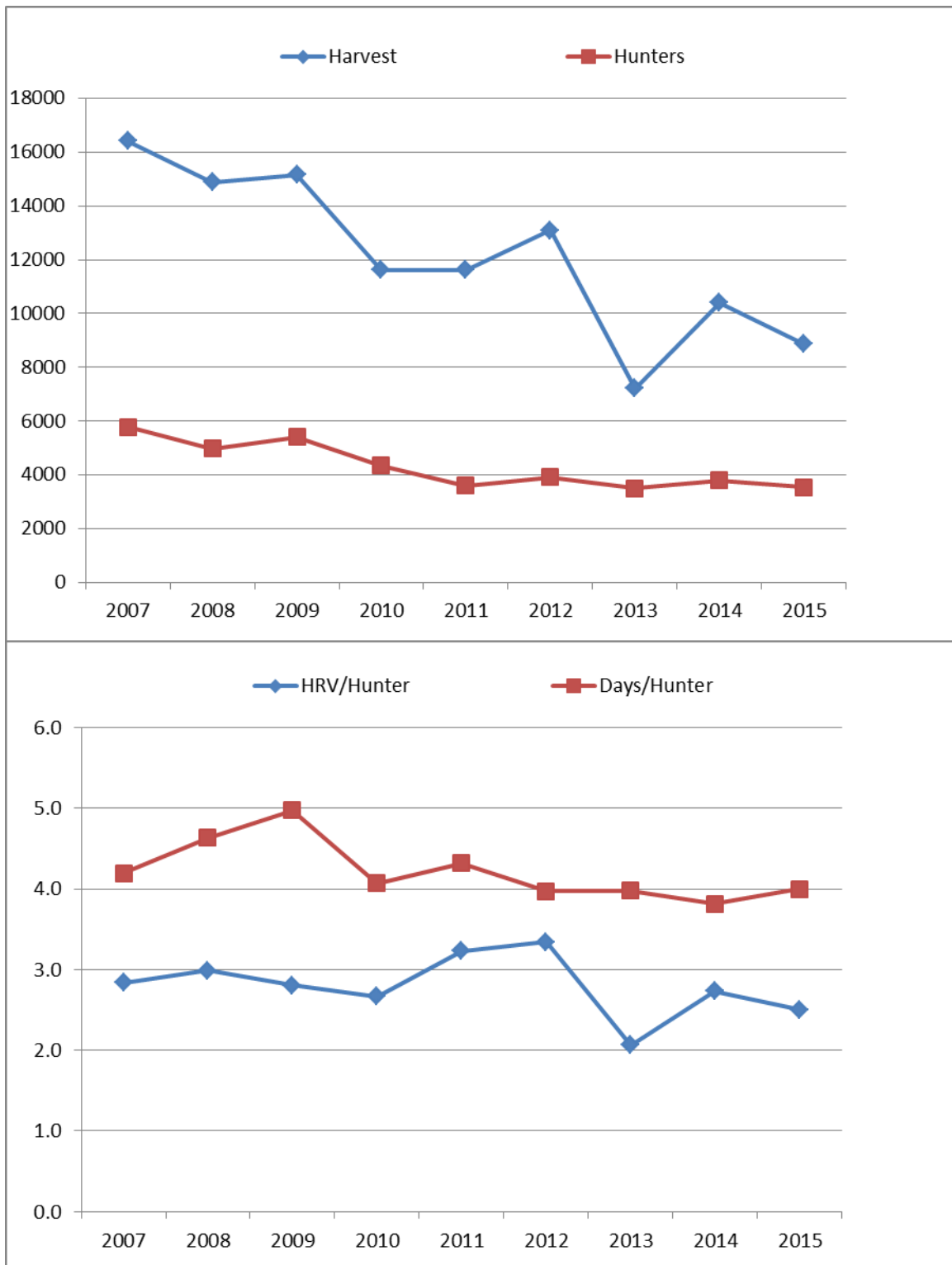
## PHEASANT

Across the district, pheasant count surveys were 26% lower this year than the previous five year average (Figure 14). Spring was cooler and wetter this year, which will help with forage for broods as long as the rains did not result in early brood loss (young chicks have poor thermoregulation and will typically die if they are soaked). Summer weather was mild, which should lead to prolonged forage and increased recruitment. District wide trends in harvest continue to decline, while hunter numbers appear to have stabilized (Figure 15, top), mirroring statewide trends. Days per hunter have remained fairly stable in the district, while harvest per hunter has declined (Figure 15, bottom). The majority of pheasant hunting occurs in Whitman County, which has about three times the harvest and about two times more hunters than Lincoln or Spokane. Overall, pheasant populations in the district should remain relatively stable this year, but are experiencing long term declines. This is a trend seen across the country, and though the cause of the decline in pheasant populations in Washington is undefined, it likely results from several causes associated with current farming practices and habitat loss.

For more information on harvest statistics see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Pheasant - Statewide and by County. For more information on pheasant status in Washington, see the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.



**Figure 14.** Maximum count from pheasant crow routes in District 2 from 2010-2016.



**Figure 15.** Top graph: Pheasant harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2007-2014. Bottom graph: Pheasant harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2007-2015.

Since most of the land in this district is private, hunters will need to spend some time knocking on doors to get access to the better sites. See the Private Lands Program section below for private land access program acres by GMU. Many cooperators have enrolled in WDFW hunter access programs recently in southeast Washington. The locations are mapped on the GoHunt website.

WDFW will also be releasing game farm produced roosters once again this fall at the traditional release sites, which are also mapped on the GoHunt website and the Eastern [Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program](#) publication. For more information, see the [Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Pheasant - Statewide and by County](#).

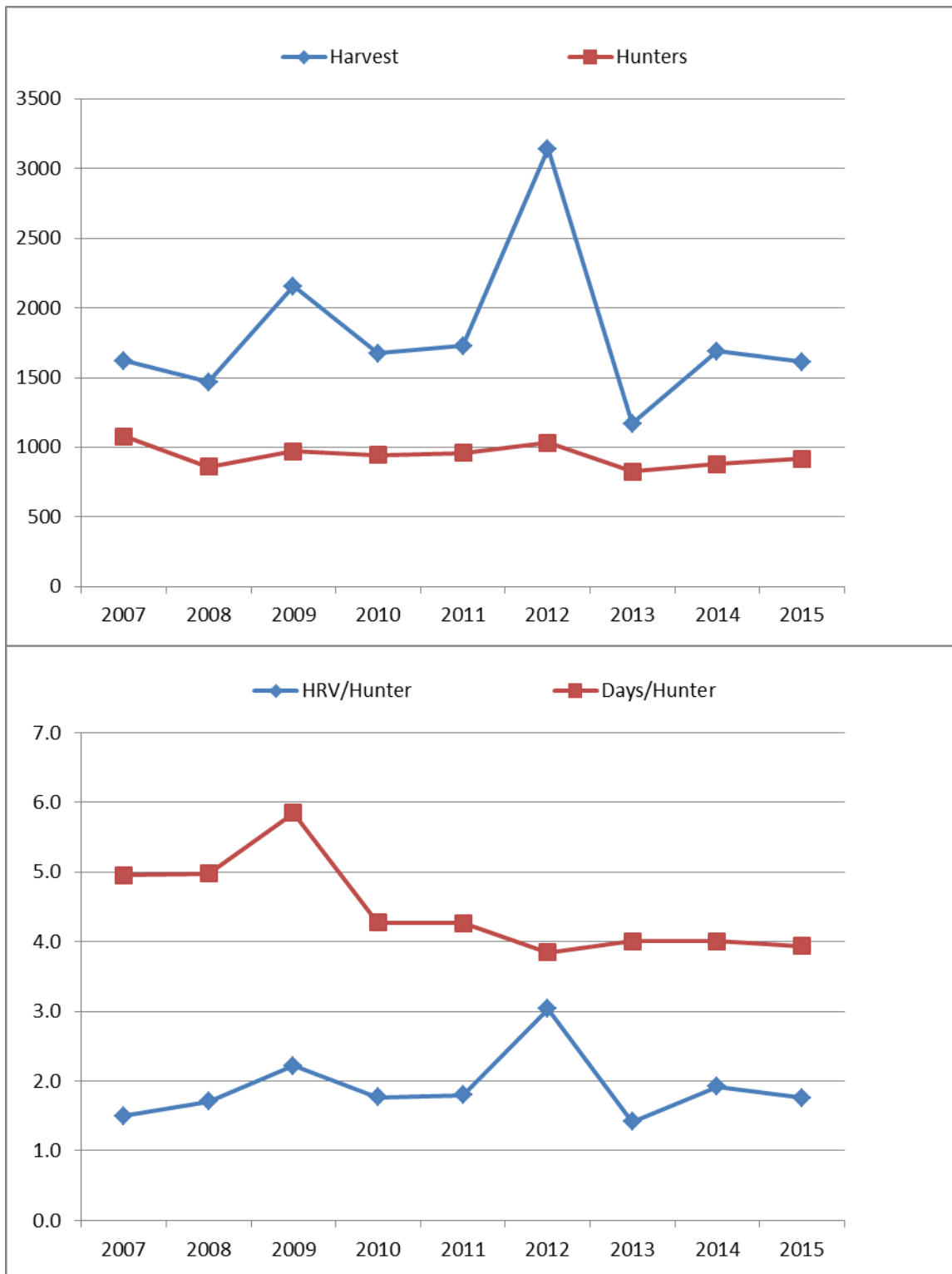
## CHUKAR AND GRAY PARTRIDGE

Nest and early chick survival for chukars and partridge should be good this year if broods survived the spring showers. The mild summer should increase forage and help with brood survival and recruitment. Harvest has been fairly stable over the past nine years except for the spike in 2012, averaging 1880 birds a year (Figure 16). Harvest in 2015 was 1612, slightly down relative to the long term average. Hunter numbers, effort (days per hunter), and harvest per hunter remain stable overall (Figure 16).

Partridge broods of 10-12 chicks have been seen regularly during field work in Lincoln County, but not as many as in 2015. Partridge are most common in Lincoln and Whitman counties and are most often seen in and adjacent to agricultural fields.

There are very few chukar in District 2. They are predominantly found along the breaks of the Snake River. Terrain is steep and rocky with limited public access from above. There is some access via U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along the Snake River from below, but not all of the Corps lands allow hunting. See the [website](#) for details.

For more information on gray partridge and chukar, see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Statewide and by County, and the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.

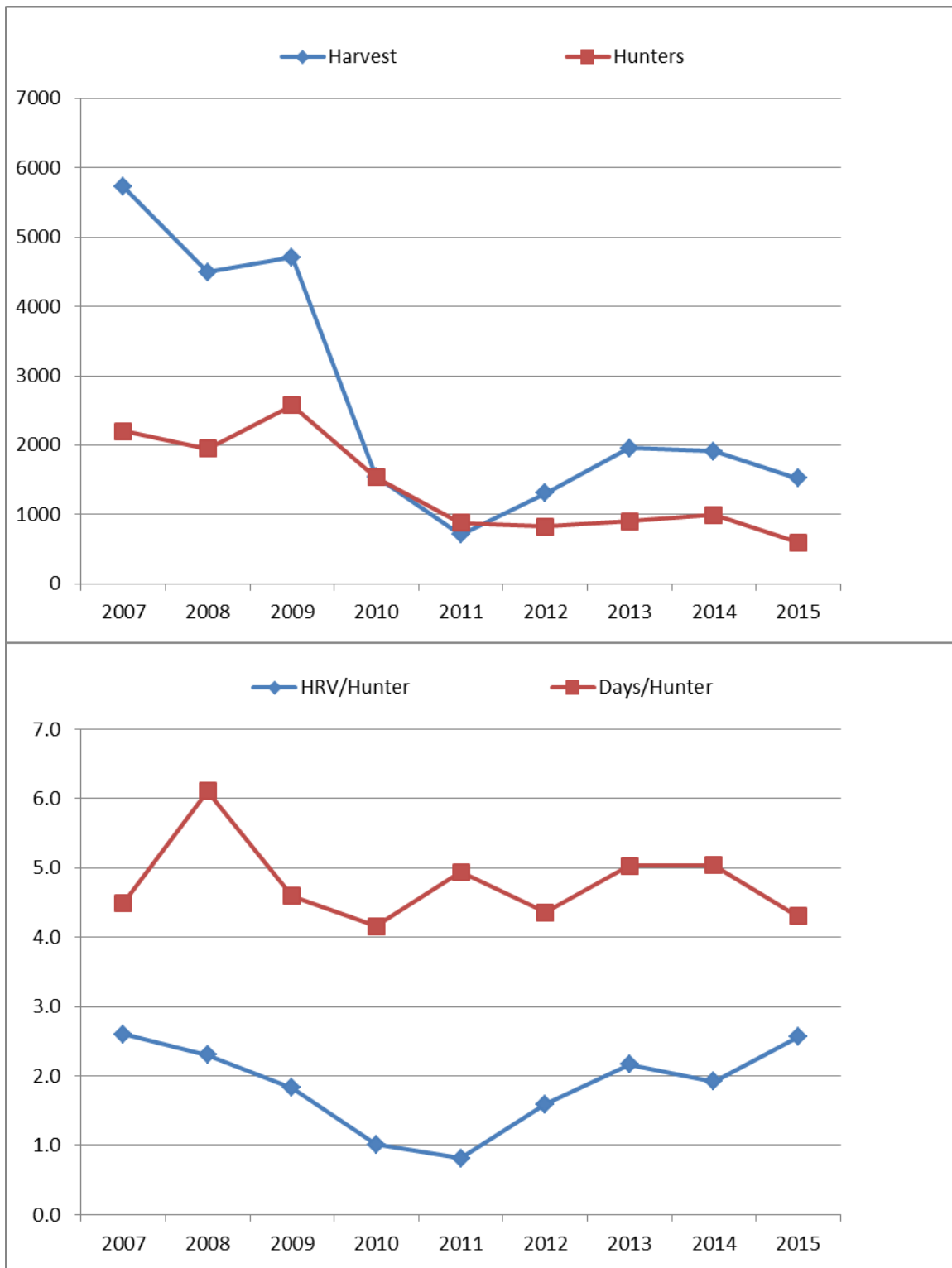


**Figure 16.** Top graph: Chukar and partridge harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2007-2015. Bottom graph: Chukar and partridge harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2007-2015.

## FOREST GROUSE

Populations overall appear to be low, but stable in District 2, with the best success found in the forested portions of GMUs 124, 127, and 133. The mild spring and summer should combine to produce good nest and brood success if hens were able to keep chicks dry during those critical first couple weeks following hatch. Harvest and hunter numbers are down relative to long term averages, but have been relatively stable the past five years (Figure 17, top). Hunter effort remains stable at about five days per hunter, while hunter success (harvest per hunter) has been on the rise (Figure 17, bottom).

For more information on forest grouse, see the [Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Statewide and by County](#), and the most recent [Game Status and Trend Report](#).

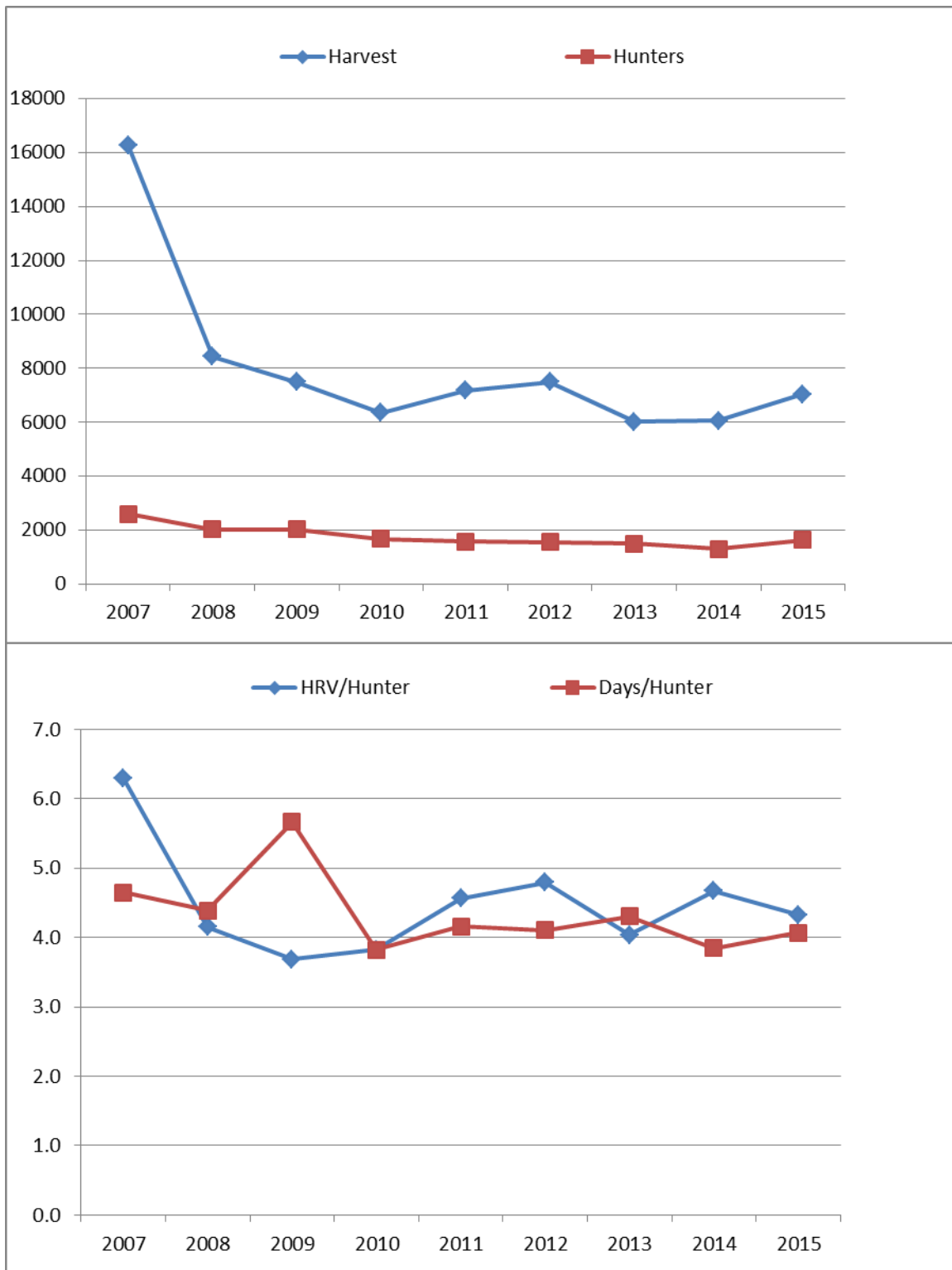


**Figure 17.** Top graph: Forest grouse harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2007-2015. Bottom graph: Forest grouse harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2007-2015.

## QUAIL

The mild spring and summer should have combined to produce good nest and brood success. There should be increased recruitment into the population if hens were able to keep chicks dry during those critical first couple weeks following hatch. All harvest metrics show a long term negative trend, but for the past five years they have been stable (Figure 18), indicating a relatively stable population. Access can be a problem, especially with most of the good quail habitat occurring in and around farmsteads and towns. For more information on harvest statistics, see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Quail - Statewide and by County. For more information on quail status in Washington, see the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.



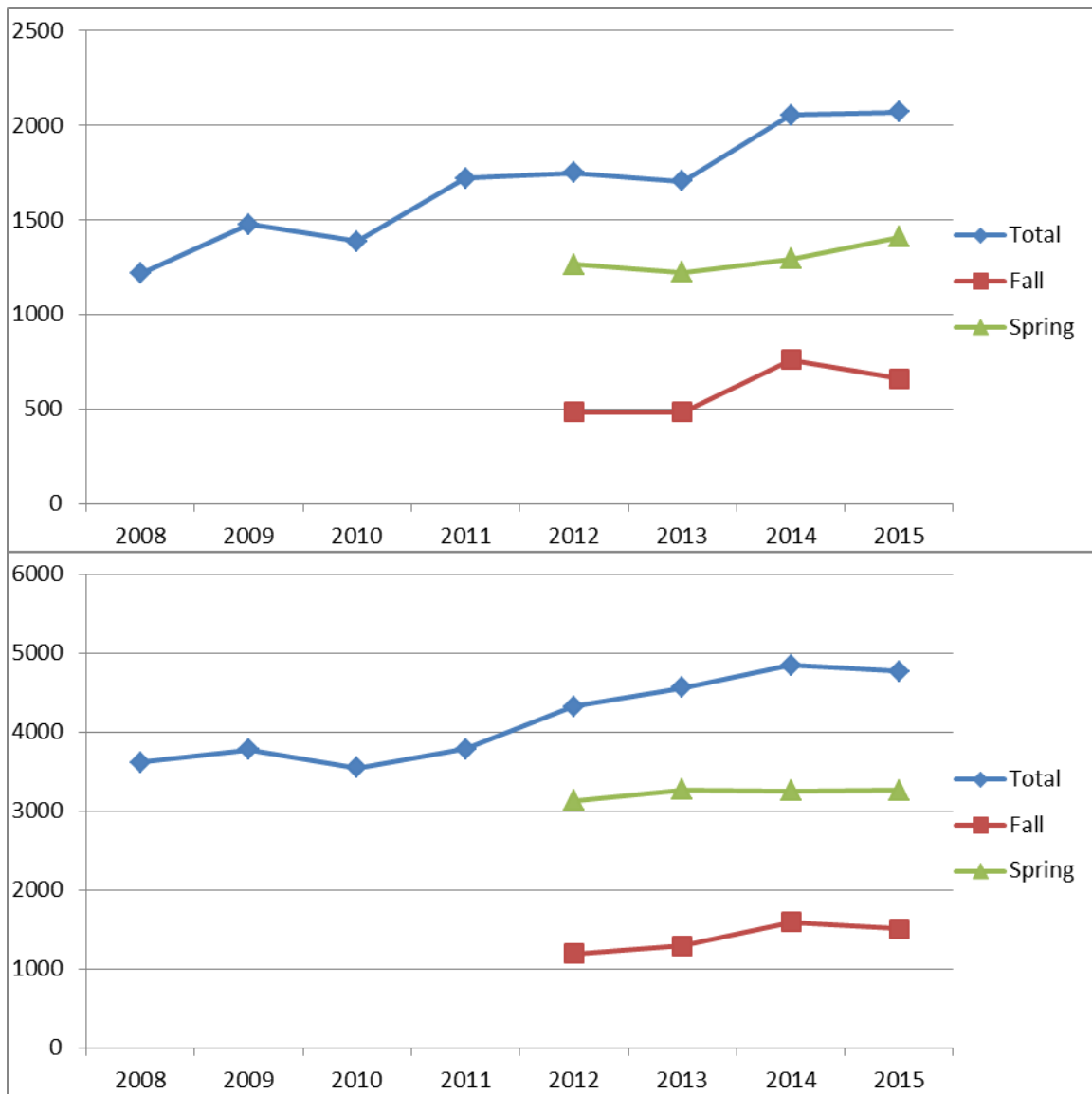


**Figure 18.** Top graph: Quail harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2007-2015. Bottom graph: Quail harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2007-2015.

## TURKEY

Opportunistic observations during field work, public reports, and damage claims all indicate that the turkey population is doing very well in GMUs 124-133 and expanding in GMUs 136-142. This corresponds with an increase in harvest in the district over the past eight years and increasing interest by hunters (Figure 19). GMU 124 sees the most harvest by far, with over 1000 birds taken in 2015. GMUs 130 & 133 are tied for a distant second with just under 400 birds harvested in each in 2015. GMU 127 had just under 200 harvested, and GMUs 136-142 had less than 50 birds harvested in each in 2015. Again, the district is predominantly private land and hunters will need to secure access. Access during the spring hunt can be competitive, but access should be relatively easy to acquire in GMU 124 for the fall hen seasons, given the extensive turkey damage complaints the department has received from this area.

For more information on turkey in Washington, see the Turkey Game Harvest Statistics and the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.



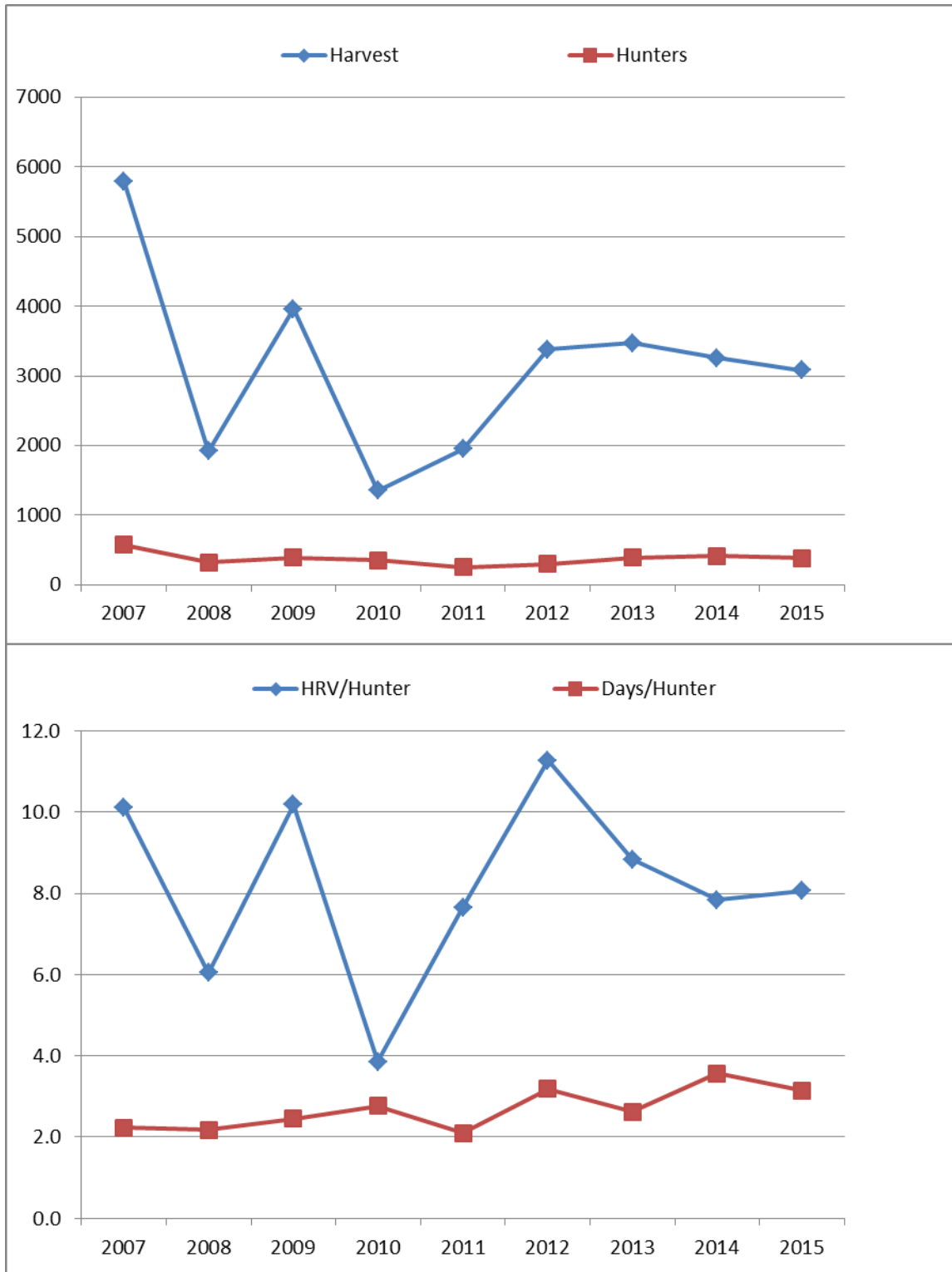
**Figure 19.** Top graph: Turkey harvest (spring, fall, & total) for District 2 from 2008-2015. Bottom graph: Turkey hunters (spring, fall, & total) for District 2 from 2008-2015.

## DOVE

Doves in District 2 occur at low population densities relative to the Columbia Basin and similar regions. As often as not, cool temperatures just prior to or during the dove season push many doves further south out of the district. Hunter harvest metrics have been highly variable, but indicate a relatively stable population (Figure 20), with harvest averaging about 3000 birds a year by about 300 hunters. Hunter effort (days per hunter) has been slowly increasing the past five years, while harvest per hunter shows high annual variation (Figure 20). It is important to note that eastside hunters have an additional dove opportunity – the Eurasian collared dove. This dove is an exotic dove that

has invaded most of eastern Washington and can be hunted and trapped with a license all year round. Eurasian collared doves are commonly found in and around towns and around grain elevators.

For more information on doves, see the [Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: 2015 Statewide and by County](#), and the most recent [Game Status and Trend Report](#).



**Figure 20.** Top graph: Dove harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2007-2015. Bottom graph: Dove harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2007-2015.

## MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS

The majority of the district is privately owned. However, WDFW and BLM own about 60,000 acres in the center of Lincoln County and about 15,000 acres in northwest Whitman County. For more information on BLM property, or to order maps, please visit the [blm.gov](http://blm.gov) website. For more information on WDFW lands, see the [wildlife area webpage](#).

The Washington Department of Natural Resources maintains land open to the public for recreational purposes. Visitors to DNR land should be aware that a Discover Pass is required for access. Further information regarding recreational opportunities on DNR land can be found on the [DNR website](#).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also maintains lands associated with the Snake River open to the public for recreational purposes. Not all of these lands are open to hunting, so hunters will want to research beforehand. More information can be found [here](#).

Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) has a limited entry youth waterfowl hunt (details available through TNWR) and allows elk hunting by permit only (permits allotted via WDFW special permit draw in June).

Riverside State Park and Mount Spokane State Park, along with all county parks in Spokane County, are open to public access, but NOT to hunting.

There are several private timber companies that allow hunting in Spokane County, and throughout the district there are private landowners enrolled in WDFW hunt access programs (see Private Lands Program below and visit the [WDFW Private Lands Access website](#)).

## PRIVATE LANDS

Since 1948, WDFW has worked with private landowners across the state to provide public access through a negotiated agreement. Landowners participating in a WDFW cooperative agreement retain liability protection provided under RCW 4.24.210. Landowners receive technical services, materials for posting (signs and posts), and in some cases, monetary compensation. In addition, lands under agreement are well known by WDFW Enforcement.

Currently, the private lands access program includes five basic access agreement types: Hunt by Written Permission (HBWP), Feel Free to Hunt (FFTH), Hunt by Reservation (HBR), Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP), and Register to Hunt (RTH). The total accessible acreage in District 2 is 170,809 acres – 24,892 in Spokane County, 45,324 in

Lincoln County, and 100,593 in Whitman County. A summary of these acres by GMU and the program are in Table 2 below. The LHP in GMU 130 is managed by the Columbia Plateau Wildlife Management Association (CPWMA). Access is only available through WDFW special permitting and CPWMA raffle permit hunts (see WDFW's 2016 Big Game Hunting Seasons & Regulations pamphlet). More information on the other four access programs and where these enrolled lands occur can be found at WDFW's [GoHunt](#) site and at the WDFW Private Lands Access web site.

**Table 2.** Acres of private land enrolled in WDFW access programs by GMU in District 2.

Game Management Unit (GMU)	Hunt by Written Permission (HBWP)		Feel Free To Hunt (FFTH)		Hunt By Reservation (HBR)		Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP)		Register to Hunt (RTH)	
	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres
124 Mt Spokane	2	298	2	9,228						
127 Mica Peak			1	3,130						
130 Cheney	1	6,246					1	5,990		
133 Roosevelt	18	20,788	1	612						
136 Harrington	12	16,658	7	7,266						
139 Steptoe	15	12,620	7	5,286	22	48,852			2	320
142 Almota	8	12,111	6	3,248	10	18,156				
TOTAL	56	68,721	24	28,770	32	67,008	1	5,990	2	320